



The Iowa Afterschool Alliance (IAA) Newsletter is a monthly venue of information and updates on afterschool programs and policies.

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Update from the IAA Network Leads

Happy Holidays!

The Iowa Afterschool Alliance has much to be thankful for this holiday season, and it's mostly due to our great members and partner organizations. At the end of October the IAA finished up a series of three forums targeted at Iowa's mayors. The IAA had the pleasure of working with the Iowa League of Cities, National League of Cities, the Finance Project, the Afterschool Alliance and local Iowa afterschool program administrators. Waterloo Mayor Tim Hurley, and Council Bluffs Mayor Tom Hanafan served as Co-Chairs for this exciting series, which was supported primarily by the National League of Cities. With the help of these individuals and organizations, the 2009 Iowa Mayoral Forum on Children, Youth, and Families was a resounding success.

The IAA would also like to welcome Burke Milnes who is joining the IAA team as an AmeriCorps VISTA working to improve the quality of Iowa's afterschool programs and assist in continuing to build the capacity of the organization. The IAA would like to thank Burke in advance for all the great work we can look forward to with his help!

Finally, the IAA would like to thank Iowa's afterschool staff, administrators, and advocates for the work you do on a daily basis. Without you, children, youth, and families in our state would not have access to opportunities to experience academic subjects and develop important verbal and interpersonal skills outside a traditional classroom. Working parents, already striving to support their families, wouldn't have that vital support from afterschool

programs that many have come to rely on. Without Iowa's afterschool programs, schools would struggle further to engage students and improve academic outcomes.

Sincerely,

Brooke Findley and Michelle Rich

Iowa Afterschool Alliance Network Leads



ASPIRE Act Introduced in the Senate

On November 17, 2009, Senators Lincoln (D-Ark.) and Franken (D-Minn.) introduced the Afterschool Partnerships Improve Results in Education (ASPIRE) Act. S. 2785 would provide dedicated grant funding for quality afterschool programs that serve older youth at the middle and high school levels. As the nation struggles to improve high school achievement and prepare the next generation for college and the 21st century workforce, it is clear that a focus on older students during these transition years is critical for long-term success. Quality afterschool programs designed specifically for older youth can make a difference in keeping students engaged in the learning process. Unfortunately, communities across the country have been forced to make difficult choices with limited funding for afterschool programs, leaving older youth with fewer options. The bill, supported by over 30 organizations including the National PTA, Save the Children, the YMCA of the USA and the Center for Law and Social Policy, addresses the challenges in a comprehensive way:

- » Authorizes a national demonstration project to create multi-state, multi-site afterschool programs for older youth. These programs would serve to expand the knowledge base for other afterschool interdisciplinary education programs and to disseminate best practices.
- » Awards competitive grants to expand or establish afterschool programs for older youth that increase student engagement in learning. Grants are provided for terms of 3 to 5 years, and can be renewed for one additional term, based on performance. Grantees must match the grant amount with private funding on an equal basis.
- » Supports the expansion and development of afterschool programs that demonstrate how academic content relates to career opportunities, provide opportunities for civic engagement and service learning, and equip students with marketable skills. Programs best suited for ASPIRE grants improve academic achievement by reinforcing core curriculum while also providing opportunities for older students to broaden their curriculum through learning outside of the traditional classroom.
- » Gives priority to programs that target services to older students who are struggling in school, come from low-income families, or attend schools in rural areas.

The letter, bill language and summary above can be used to reach out to your senators in support of S. 2785. Please let us know if you need contact information or additional background information.

A companion bill in the House is expected to be introduced shortly. More information on afterschool and older youth can be found at <http://www.afterschoolalliance.org/policyOlderYouth.cfm>

Mayoral Forum Resources

In October, the IAA, Iowa League of Cities and National League of Cities joined forces to host three online forums on children, youth and families. The sessions provided a valuable discussion on improving academic achievement, building a skilled workforce, and supporting working families in Iowa's communities. You can learn more about the Forums and see webinar materials on the Iowa League of Cities website.

<http://www.iowaleague.org/Workshops/OtherLeagueWorkshops.aspx?id=827>



Using the Child Care and Development Fund to Support a System of Quality Improvement for School-Age Programs

This strategy brief provides ideas and considerations for state leaders looking to build a coordinated system of quality improvement for school-age programs. Based on a review of the literature and interviews with state decision makers, this brief describes promising approaches for investing the Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) and other resources in six system components:

- » Governance and coordination;
- » Regulations;
- » Program and practitioner standards;
- » Program and practitioner supports;
- » Financing; and
- » Accountability

An accompanying self-assessment tool is available to help state leaders identify the strengths, opportunities, and gaps in their current system of quality supports for school-age programs. The tool will soon be posted on the Afterschool Investments website; in the meantime, please contact the Afterschool Investments Project via e-mail at afterschool@financeproject.org to request a copy of the tool.

New Resource from the Afterschool Investments Project

The Afterschool Investments Project (AIP), a service of the Child Care Bureau, provides technical assistance to Child Care and Development Fund (CCDF) grantees and other state and local leaders to support afterschool efforts. AIP is pleased to announce the following new resource is available on the project website: <http://nccic.acf.hhs.gov/afterschool/>.

Afterschool Alliance Wiki Pages

The Afterschool Alliance has created a two Wiki Pages for the field and staff to post ideas, questions and answers related to the Economic Recovery Act and Education Reform. For other background on the bill and afterschool, please see the Policy & Action Center page. The Wiki pages can be found [here](#) and [here](#).

Race to the Top Rules Update

U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan and his staff recently shared that successful Race to the Top applications will need to focus in three specific areas. States will need to make a persuasive case for their education reform agenda, demonstrate significant buy in for local school districts, and develop plans to evaluate teachers and principals based on student performance. These three factors rose to the top of the over 30 criteria that states will be scored on.

At stake for states is a slice of the biggest single discretionary pool of education money in the economic-stimulus packages passed by Congress in February – a \$4.35 billion prize, of which \$250 million has been pledged to help states develop common assessments as part of a separate nationwide effort.



Each winning state's share of what's left will depend on its population of children ages 5-17, according to nonbinding estimates provided by the department, Iowa could receive between \$60-175 million. For more information on the Race to the Top rules, click [here](#).

Funding for Common Assessments Information

Officials recently gathered at a public meeting to discuss how federal officials could design the competition around Common Assessment funding. Concerns were raised regarding the funding of common assessments and the challenges the Department of Education faces in spending \$350 million in economic-stimulus money to aid development of Common Assessments in reading and mathematics. The ambitious goals for the assessments include providing teachers with more-useful instructional information, measuring student growth, and gauging teacher and principal effectiveness.

Three common messages emerged on how to design the competition for those funds:

- » State consortia should consider devising assessments to aid instructional practices, in addition to the annual accountability tests now required by the federal No Child Left Behind Act.
- » Teachers must be much more involved in the development, use, and possibly even the scoring of assessments.
- » The Education Department should seek to structure state consortia in such a way that the one-time infusion of cash leverages sustained work.

The meeting was part of a series intended to help officials gain input into the design of the competition, one part of the Race to the Top program established under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. The next hearings to gather input on the assessment competition will take place in Atlanta and Denver. For more on concerns surrounding the funding of Common Assessments, click [here](#).

Upcoming Professional Development, Events, and Funding Opportunities

Siemens We Can Change the World Challenge (Deadline: January 31 for Elementary Schools; March 15 for Middle Schools)

The Siemens We Can Change the World Challenge gives students the opportunity, tools and inspiration to become those agents of change. Beginning August 19, 2009 through March 15, 2010, middle school student teams from across the country will be challenged to create sustainable, reproducible environmental improvements in their local communities. Top prizes will include a chance to appear on Discovery Network's Planet Green, a share in thousands of dollars in savings bonds, a Discovery Adventure trip and more. Get started at: <http://wecanchange.com>

Global Environment Facility Small Grants Programme (Deadline: Ongoing)

The Global Environment Facility Small Grants Programme (SGP), funded by the Global Environment Facility and implemented by the United Nations Development Programme, supports community-based work in the areas of biodiversity conservation, climate change mitigation, protection of international waters, prevention of land degradation, and elimination of persistent organic pollutants. SGP supports activities of non-governmental and community-based organizations in 101 participating developing countries. (A list of participating countries is available on the SGP website.) The grants of up to \$50,000 support the following types of activities: community-based assessment and planning; pilot demonstration activities; monitoring and analysis; and dissemination, networking, and policy dialogue. Proposed projects must meet country-specific eligibility criteria laid out in each SGP Country Programme Strategy. Interested applicants should begin the application process by contacting the SGP National Coordinator for their country to receive project application guidelines and forms. <http://sgp.undp.org/index.cfm>

Inter-American Foundation Grants (Deadline: Ongoing)

The Inter-American Foundation (IAF) is an independent agency of the United States government that provides grants to non-governmental and community-based organizations in Latin America and the Caribbean for innovative, sustainable, and participatory self-help programs. Funds are available for the efforts of grassroots groups to improve the living conditions of the disadvantaged and the excluded; enhance their capacity for decision-making and self-governance; and develop partnerships with the public sector, business, and civil society. The IAF does not identify problems or suggest projects; instead it responds to initiatives presented by the applicant organizations. Community-based and grassroots nonprofit organizations are eligible to apply for grants of \$25,000 to \$400,000. Proposals may be submitted throughout the year. Proposals presented or directed by organizations outside the country in which the project is located will not be accepted.

http://www.iaf.gov/index/index_en.asp

Monsanto Fund Grants (Deadline: January 1)

The Monsanto Fund, the charitable arm of the Monsanto Company, provides support to nonprofit organizations in communities around the world, with priority given to communities where the company has employees, facilities, or strategic business interests. Funding is focused on four areas: nutritional improvement through agriculture; the environment; science education; and support of company communities, including education, arts and culture, human services, agricultural safety, and local police and fire departments. Eligible applicants, which include U.S. and international nonprofit organizations, governmental units, private schools and hospitals, and medical research organizations, must qualify as tax-exempt public charities or the equivalent, and provide proof of tax-exempt status. Grant requests must be for a minimum of \$25,000. Organizations from outside the United States must begin the application process by communicating with the appropriate regional Monsanto contact. If approved by the regional contact, the organization may submit an application. The next application deadline is January 1, 2010. Visit the Fund's website to access application guidelines and regional contact information.

<http://www.monsantofund.org>



Check Out IAA's Facebook Page!

IAA has recently created a Facebook page. Through our page, you can find the latest information and updates regarding IAA and its activities, as well as links to relevant resources and funding opportunities. To search for the IAA page, just type the Iowa Afterschool Alliance on the search box at www.facebook.com. However, please continue to visit the IAA website for the listing of all resources at www.iowaafterschoolalliance.org.



Reminder

As we continue our work in promoting afterschool programs, below are words from a famous American to remind us why we do the work we do.

"A child is a person who is going to carry on whatever you have started. He is going to sit where you are sitting and when you are gone, attend to those things which you think are important. You may adopt all the policies you please, but how they will be carried out depends on him. He will assume control of your cities, states, and nations. He is going to move in and take over your churches, schools, universities, and corporations. Your books are going to be judged, accepted, or condemned by him. The fate of humanity is in his hands. So it might be well to pay him some attention."

- Abraham Lincoln